

Over A Brew Session

26 January 2024

Direct Payments



CURATORS
OF CHANGE

directors of
adass
adult social services
eastern region

connecting innovating improving



Guide

Grab a brew



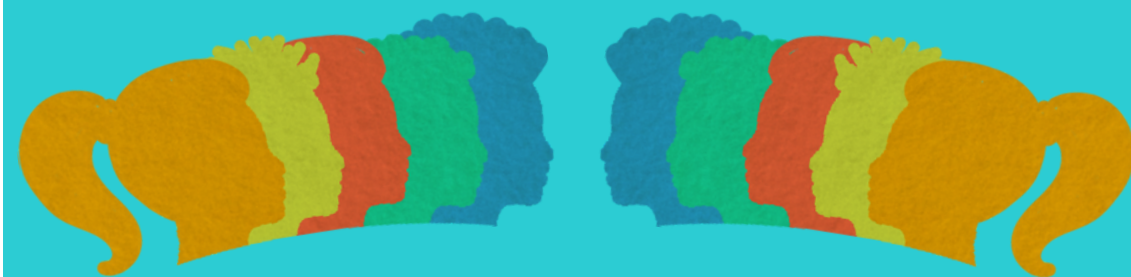
Once you have your brew,
ask someone to be the timer

Reflect



Each person has time to think
about the questions for ONE
minute

Have your say



Each take it in turns to say
your response
(TWO mins each)



Use the rest of the time to
reflect on what's been said
(no fixing)

Still got some time?



Talk about:
What's not been said?
What are your lasting thoughts?

INFUSED WITH THE CAMERADOS PRINCIPLES

**MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT LIKE YOU**



**ASK SOMEONE WHO IS
STRUGGLING TO HELP YOU**



**NO FIXING - JUST BE
ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER**



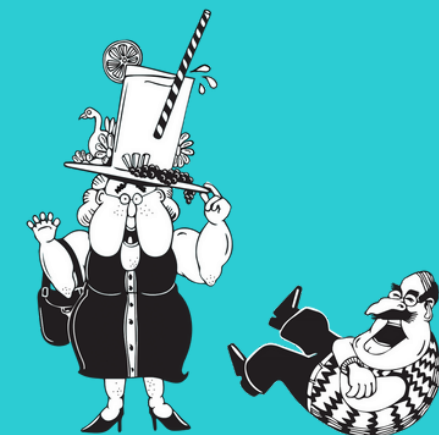
**IT'S OK TO DISAGREE
RESPECTFULLY**



**IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIT
RUBBISH SOMETIMES**



**TO BE SILLY IS TO
BE HUMAN**



INTRODUCTION

During our introductions we asked what people were looking forward to over the weekend - on one level this is a light question and we got some lovely answers that ranged from *having vegetarian haggis* to *attending a baby shower*.

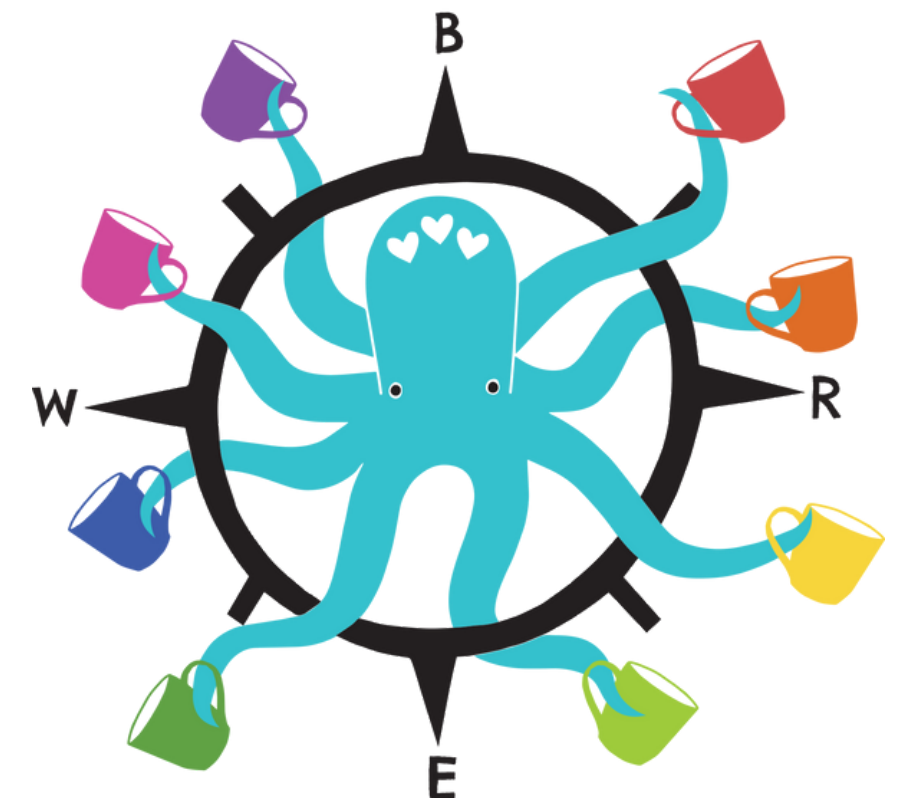
On another level this question connects us to what this work is all about - how people can live the lives they want to, have things to look forward to, against a backdrop 'system' that has relied on processes that aim to weigh up people's situations for worthiness and need.

Personally I was really pleased to see that someone was going to watch a brilliant and oddly relevant 1950s film *A Matter of Life and Death*, with David Niven, which is an absolute favourite of mine.

#Spoiler - it's about a man being judged as deserving to carry on living or go to heaven ... and its available on YouTube!

We then listened to Jades story - about her experience of having her care reviewed. This story brought up different feelings across the group - but some of the common feelings included

- Frustration
- Bewilderment
- "Glad I'm not alone"
- Concern for those who can't challenge



What emerged during this session about Direct Payments included:

35 people attended the session to share ideas, insights and views...
Over a Brew



1
Challenges associated with Personal Assistants

2
Better support for people who wish to take up direct payments

3
Feelings

4
Positives

5
Opportunities for improvements

1 Challenges associated with Personal Assistants

Pay for PAs

- Rates of payments for PAs are different in every LA
- No way of recording the rates of pay for PAs

Recruitment

- Difficulties with recruiting PAs

Unclear approach to rates for DPs

No way of recording rates of pay for PAs - really?

Recording rates of pay for PAs should be in place

If Direct Payment recipients don't have much power re PA rates and local authorities don't do much re PA rates then PA rates are doomed

PAs is still a challenge due to a mix of issues with rates, requirements for reporting, and organising



2 Better support for people who wish to take up direct payments

In many cases, **staff** who support Direct Payments have many hats and may not fulfil specialist support (specialist gatekeepers needed)

Complicated system - lack of Knowledge

“Practitioners don't promote DP's as it's too hard”

- **Dealing with payroll** is quite difficult with **people employing PAs**
- Unless you know about direct payments, you are not going to know about them/People don't know enough about direct payments
- System is **too complicated**
- **Lack of consistency/knowledge** within organisations

Unclear process and expectations

Specialist DP contact would be helpful

CURATORS
OF CHANGE

We need to learn to communicate the options better.

DP employers have to jump through hoops that larger employers seem not to have to do

Processes need to be clear on both ends for the person with lived experience and for social care staff

Need to communicate the options better - practitioners need to think differently - often its a case of we know what services are out there - but DP is really so much more than that - variety and flexibility!

Councils need to constantly refresh their direct payment offer to ensure it is fit for purpose

More training should be given

Local authorities are stuck in their ways and this doesn't support DPs

3

Feelings

- People **feel like they are losing control of their lives** rather than having control
- **Frustration** 'The challenges with Direct Payments are nothing new'
- People can be sent into a state of **panic, paralysis, fight and flight !**



Frustrated is the feeling: loads of learning about joining up different functions, which would save time and give a better experience for people

The feeling of it being a threat - no good

The feeling of it being a threat - no good

Cross

Anxiety

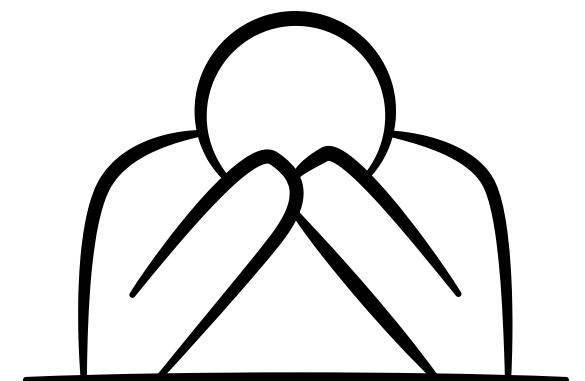
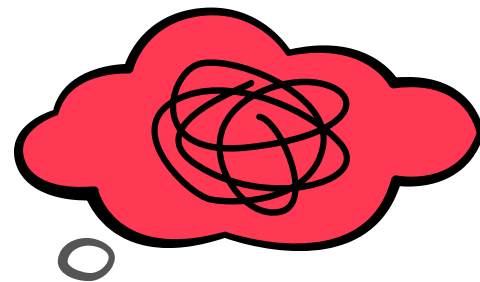
Bewildered

Mixed messages lead to frustration. Process before the person's choice.

World on shoulders

Sad that people are having to cope with these experiences

Shocked



4

Positives

There is recognition that direct payments often give good value for money and better outcomes



DP is around giving someone an opportunity, giving someone hope and an opportunity to live 'their life

Positive is it gives choice

Positives - giving choice

In our area we have launched self assessment for carers, going really well 90 cases , 80 gone thru to complete assessment, with a lot of positive feedback

5

Opportunities for improvements

- LAs should encourage micro. provider approaches
- Language can be of a punishing nature rather than providing choice, control and flexibility
- DPs often have rules and stipulations whereas they should give hope, opportunities, connection, purpose and meaning in a person's life
- LAs spend time monitoring for fraud but the actual fraudulent activity is minimal
- Processes need to be clear on both ends for the person with lived experience and for social care staff
- Review out of date policy - create organic ,flexible policy
- DP allows for Choice and control over how needs are met but also there are usually big savings to be made.
- Develop Commissioning networks to use coproduction to design self directed support offers
- Ensure a National approach to get rid of local differences in offer and standards
- Coproduction can absolutely provide access to 'what good looks like ' for different people

Too much difference across Local Authorities - national level approach would help

Education for practitioners and not letting old tales stick in practitioners minds.

People should be able to have a choice of care

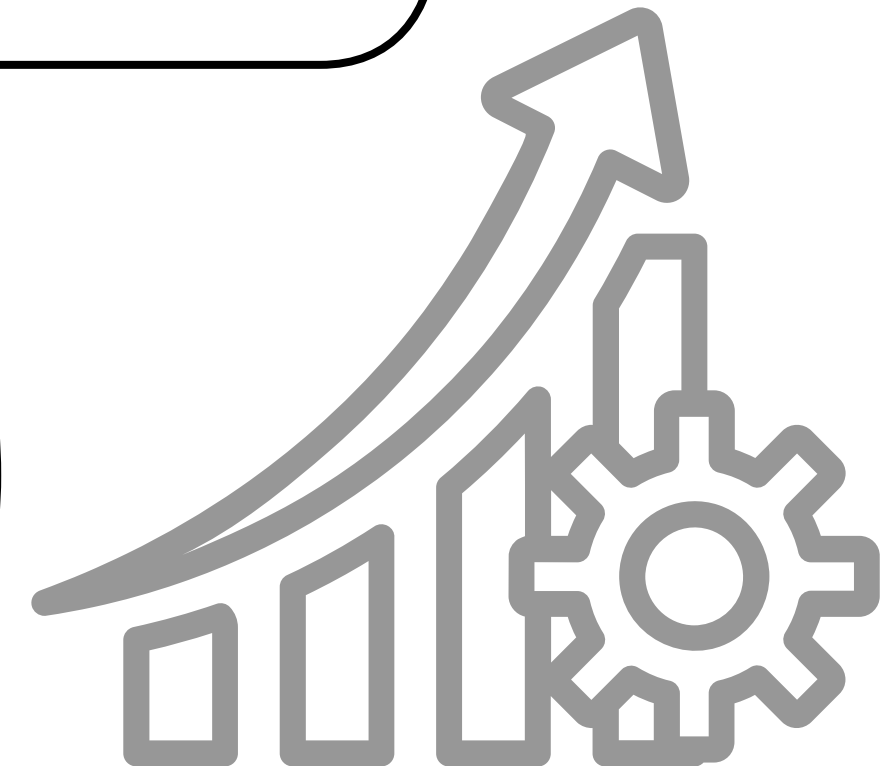
Savings that can be made - it is in everyone's interests that people know about DP's - but the priority should be choice and control and people being able to make decisions about their own lives.

Also talked about micro-providers this hasn't been encouraged either...

One person can't decide what good looks like - needs coproduction

Example from Peterborough - gave a lot of chance to have perspectives that didn't have - taking time out. Noticed a policy that hadn't been changed in 4-5 yrs - they should be organic - not fixed?

Too much time on fraud - uncovering not much - is that a good use of time...



SUMMARY OF THE POLICY COMPARISON ACTIVITY

Two different DP policies were shown to the group, which had very different approaches. One policy appeared to be less formal, but neither ticked all the best practice boxes.

From our conversations people would prefer policies that are co-produced, to incorporate flexibility and avoid being overly prescriptive. Coproduction allows for testing of impact on those who have to use the policies.

Some of the specific ideas mentioned include the following :

- **A focus on Intention** - what is the intended outcome of this set of rules ?
- **Consideration of assumptions** - be clear but start from a position of trust , not expecting people to try to act fraudulently
- **Empathic approach** - formal documents are often off putting and provoke anxiety.
- **Use of plain language** that is non threatening or punitive
- A **positive, friendly** and **collegiate** tone



Were either of
them co-
produced?

Neither are
easy read

Policy A was overbearing,
threatening and
demotivating

Policy B was more
accessible in
understanding and less
intimidating than A

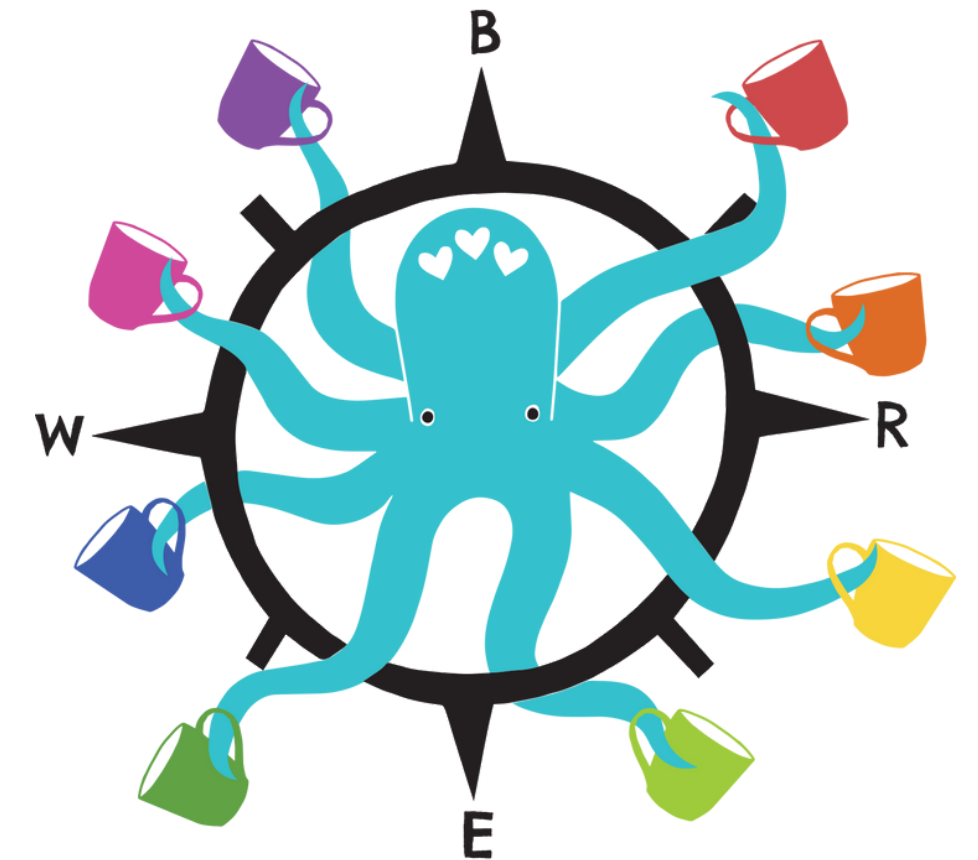
FINAL REFLECTIONS

Although this conversation was grounded in Direct Payment Policy – it naturally sparked a wide ranging conversation.

In relation to the policy side of things, even good policy on direct payments feels controlling, and not a very positive thing. There is some work to do on coproducing policies with people, and the feeling was this isn't currently happening. There was recognition that both policies we reviewed were focussed on what mattered to 'the system' rather than the people. A sense of gate-keeping.

Communication about DPs – if people don't know about them, they won't think about them. Offer them to people or ask their social worker for them. The potential to support people to live the lives they want to, in places called home is there if we can let go of the power. This feels brave for many, but there are many examples of when it has led to lives better lived, and financial savings!

Direct Payments are not for everybody, we need to be offering micro providers and Individual Service Funds to people, or finding other ways of people being able to 'commission' their own care and support. Again it doesn't feel like the work on commission and coproduction is being driven by what matters to people. It still focuses on what the system needs.





And after 16 Over A Brew sessions we are still attracting new people who are finding it both challenging and valuable

Many thanks, very interesting

It was really good and eye opening

Thank You really enjoyed the session

The time has flown away.
Many thanks to you all

Thank you, very insightful

This was my first Over a Brew and found the session very informative and challenging (in a good way) - thank you! Hope to see you all at future sessions

Thank you everyone, really good to hear from you all

Enjoyed it - really good to hear people's views in a friendly environment





Thank You!



**Please join us for the next session on Friday
23rd February to talk about having the
freedom to support people... Over a Brew!**